

Against Intersectionality

Mocombe PC*

Keiser University, West Virginia State University, the Mocombeian Foundation, Inc, USA

*Corresponding author: Mocombe PC, Keiser University, West Virginia State University, the Mocombeian Foundation, Inc, USA; E-mail: pmocombe@mocombeian.com

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Abstract

Intersectional theory highlights how the intersection of power and privilege, or arrangements of inequality along gender, race, class, global location, sexual orientation, and age, creates differing forms and intensity of a social actor's experience of oppression within capitalist relations of production. This work posits that intersectional theory is a nonsensical theory that undermines the universality of the capitalist relations of production upon which contemporary Western societies are constituted in favor of structurally differentiated serial identities that do not offer an alternative to the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism but rather seeks to integrate it for equality of opportunity, distribution, and recognition. In fact, I conclude the work by suggesting that intersectional theory is itself a product of the capitalist relations of production of postindustrial societies; it is a mechanism of system and social integration for postindustrial capitalist relations of production with its emphasis on financially servicing serial identities for the purpose of accumulating surplus value via their consumption patterns.

Keywords: Neomercantilism; Phenomenological structuralism; Structurationism; Neoliberalism; Globalization; Capitalist world-system

Introduction

Typically associated with feminism, so-called Black feminism, and the writings of Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989, 1991), intersectional theory highlights how the intersection of power and privilege, or arrangements of inequality along gender, race, class, global location, sexual orientation, and age, i.e., “matrix of domination,” creates differing forms and intensity of a social actor's experience of oppression within capitalist relations of production [1,2]. This work, using a structurationist sociological approach, phenomenological structuralism, to understanding the constitution of society and human action, posits that intersectional theory is a nonsensical theory that undermines the universality of the capitalist relations of production upon which contemporary Western societies are constituted in favor of analyzing the lived-experiences of individual social actor's based on their intersecting structurally differentiated serial identities, created within and by the power elites of capitalism itself, which do not offer an alternative to the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism;

instead, the aim of the intersectional analysis is system and social integration, i.e., for equality of opportunity, distribution, and recognition, of the other. In fact, I conclude the work by suggesting that intersectional theory is itself a product of the capitalist relations of production of postindustrial societies; it is a mechanism of system and social integration for postindustrial capitalist relations of production to interpellate and embourgeois the other into the relations of production of the postindustrial West and America under neoliberal global processes. That is to say, I am suggesting that intersectional theory is itself a product of the capitalist relations of production of postindustrial societies; it is a mechanism of system and social integration for postindustrial capitalist relations of production with its emphasis on financially servicing (global) serial identities for the purpose of accumulating surplus value via their hyper consumption patterns.

Background of the Problem

Typically associated with feminism, so-called Black feminism, and the writings of Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989, 1991),

intersectional theory highlights how the intersection of power and privilege, or arrangements of inequality along gender, race, class, global location, sexual orientation, and age, creates differing forms and intensity of a social actor's experience of oppression within capitalist relations of production. For the most part, however, this broad perspective over the serial intersecting forms of a social actor's experience of oppression highlighted by this sociological definition overlooks the fact that it, intersectionality, "is regularly envisioned as the paradigmatic analytic that stands for both black feminism and black women (indeed, the two are regularly collapsed and conflated), the theory that requires women's studies to reckon with black woman and her imagined complexity" [2]. This conflation of intersectionality with black feminism and black women leaves the debates in the academy over intersectionality as a struggle between utilizing it to demonstrate how the intersection of power and privilege, or arrangements of inequality along gender, race, class, global location, sexual orientation, and age, creates differing forms and intensity of a social actor's, in the broadest sense of their identities, experience of oppression within capitalist relations of production, or as a methodological heuristic tool to explore black feminism and black women [2]. In either case, there is a failure to understand intersectionality as a product of the postindustrial mode of production [2]. That is to say, in classic Marxist terms, intersectionality in the academy is a product of the (postindustrial) mode of production shaping the ideological superstructure, the academy in this case, rather than a novice approach in place to critically assess or topple the system city of postindustrial (neoliberal) capitalist relations of production. This work, using a structurationist sociological approach, phenomenological structuralism, to understanding the constitution of society and human action, posits that intersectional theory is a nonsensical theory that undermines the universality of the capitalist relations of production upon which contemporary Western societies are constituted in favor of analyzing the lived-experiences of individual social actor's based on their intersecting structurally differentiated serial identities, created within and by the power elites of capitalism itself, which do not offer an alternative to the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism; instead, the aim of the intersectional analysis and political praxis is system and social integration, i.e., for equality of opportunity, distribution, and recognition, of the other. In fact, I conclude the work by suggesting that intersectional theory is itself a product of the capitalist relations of production of postindustrial societies; it is a mechanism of system and social integration for postindustrial (neoliberal global) capitalist relations of production to interpellate and embourgeois the other into the relations of production of the postindustrial West and America.

Theory and Method

Mocombeian phenomenological structuralism is a structurationist perspective, which posits that societal and agential constitution are a result of power relations, interpellation, and socialization or embourgeoisement via five systems, i.e., mode of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse, which are constituted and reified within two dominant (ontological) types (the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism or the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism) of system/social structure or what Mocombe calls a "social class language game" by persons, power elites, who control the means and modes of production in a material resource framework. Culture is the characteristics placed on the two (ontological) forms of system and social integration, which are metaphors for how the human species satisfies its material needs (communally or a Hobbesian struggle of all against all for individual wealth, capital) [3]. Once interpellated and socialized (or embourgeoisied in neoliberal capitalism) by these five systems, which are reified as a social structure and society, social actors recursively organize, reproduce, and are differentiated by the rules of conduct of the social structure, which are sanctioned by the power elites (rentier oligarchs in neoliberal capitalism) who control the means and modes of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse in a material resource framework. Hence, societal and agential constitution are both duality and dualism: a dualism given the reification of the social structure via the five systems; and a duality given the internalization of the rules of the five systems, which become the (structurally differentiated) agential initiatives or praxes of social actors. Difference, or alternative social praxis, in Mocombe's structuration theory, phenomenological structuralism, is not structural differentiation revealed by praxis as articulated by traditional structurationists; instead, it is a result of actions arising from the deferment of meaning and ego-centered communication given the interaction of two other structuring structures (physiological drives of the body and brain; and phenomenal properties of subatomic, carrier, particles that constitute the human subject) during the interpellation and socialization or embourgeoisement of social actors throughout their life span or cycle, which produces alternative praxis that is exercised at the expense of the threat these practices may pose to the ontological security of social actors in the social structure or society. These alternative praxes occur in both forms of system and social integration of the human species and become structurally differentiated in order to (relationally) define the norms, values, ideas, and ideals of the two by their respective power elites.

Hence, Mocombe's theoretical (structural Marxist) framework is a universal framework that makes no gender, racial, or ethnic distinctions in its application. Gender, racial, and ethnic (so-called



intersectional) identities are structurally differentiated serial identities that do not offer alternative praxes (form of system and social integration) to the current dominant social class language game, i.e., the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism; instead, they are standpoint theories not an alternative ontological form of system or social integration. To serve as a counter-hegemonic different form of system and social integration, the serial identities would have to experience, and protest against, structural differentiation within the alternative form of system and social integration from which they originally were interpellated, socialized, and differentiated. That is, if they were constituted and reified within the practices of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, to serve as an alternative to the latter they would have to be interpellated, constituted, and reified within the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism form of system and social integration, which would make them incommensurable with the practices of the latter. The reverse also holds true; serial identities differentiated with the ontology of the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism to serve as an alternative counterhegemonic praxis would have to be interpellated, constituted, and reified within the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism. Intersectionality, is not doing that; instead, its serial identities are negative dialectically highlighting how the intersection of power and privilege, or arrangements of inequality along gender, race, class, global location, sexual orientation, and age, creates differing forms and intensity of a social actor's experience of oppression within capitalist relations of production for the purpose of transmogrifying the social structure for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution of those discriminated against. To this end, intersectional theory is itself a product of the capitalist relations of production of (neoliberal) postindustrial societies; it is a mechanism of system and social integration for postindustrial capitalist relations of production to interpellate and embourgeois the other into the relations of production of the postindustrial West and America.

Discussion and Conclusion

Neoliberalism represents a resurgence of political economic liberalism in the Western world following the fall of global communism in the 1990s. Globalization (1970s-2000s) is the imperial attempt of the West, under American hegemony, to establish a unipolar world order whereby they integrate and colonize the (Western and non-Western) world around the juridical framework of political economic liberalism (neoliberalism), which emanates out of the Weberian ontology of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, at the expense of all other forms of system and social integration, via the five Mocombeian systems (ideology, ideological apparatuses, language, communicative discourse, and the modes of production). Hence, contemporary (neoliberal)

globalization represents a mercantilist Durkheimian mechanicalization of the world via the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism under American (neoliberal) hegemony around the organization of work (agricultural, periphery nations; industry, semi-periphery nations, and postindustrial, core nations) and its ideology, identity politics. The power elites, the upper-class of owners and high-level executives, rentier oligarchs, of the latter (American hegemon) serves as an imperial agent seeking to interpellate and embourgeois (via the organization of work, ideology, ideological apparatuses, language, and communicative discourse) the masses or multitudes of the world to the juridical framework of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism to constitute a world imperial (neomercantilism) system wherein countries are divided by the hegemon, i.e., the United States of America, into periphery, semi-periphery, and core nations based on prescribed organizations of work (modes of production) by rentier oligarchs, a multicultural, multiethnic, multigender, and multiracial upper-class of owners and high-level executives, i.e., a transnational corporate capitalist class (Leslie Sklair's term), operating out of financial based core nations like America and the collective West (including Australia, South Korea, and Japan). In the age of (neoliberal) capitalist globalization and climate change this is done within the dialectical processes of two forms of fascism or system/social integration: 1) right-wing neoliberalism around the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism and organization of work (agribusiness, tourism, and resource extraction of periphery nations; industry of semi-periphery nations; and service financial industries in core nations) prescribed to these countries by America and the West; and 2) (neo) liberal identity politics masquerading as cosmopolitanism or hybridization "enframed" by a cashlessness pegged to the US dollar backed by Saudi Arabian oil with the Zionist colony state of Israel grounding the Judeo-Christian metaphysical system of the American empire for social integration via ideology (identity politics and notions of democracy disseminated throughout the world by the American mechanism, USAID, National Endowment for Democracy, NED, World Bank, United Nations, and IMF), ideological apparatuses (church and education), and (medium of) communicative discourses (media, TV, etc.) under the control of the West and America.

Both forms of system and social integration represent two sides of the same fascist coin in the age of (neoliberal) globalization and climate change (1970s-present) even though proponents of the latter (left) position view the former antagonistically. The former (1), operating through the nationalism and fascism of right-wing oligarchs, backed by the American hegemon, sets the stage for the organization of work prescribed to nation-states by American rentier oligarchs. Once in power and the political and economic order has been prepared for neoliberal capitalism by right-wing oligarchs, they are offset by the identity left (2), also supported

(USAID and the NED) by rentier oligarchs of the American hegemon to constitute a political economic order constituted by two political parties representing both positions, each supported by the rentier oligarchs of the American empire through its (financial) control of their mode of production, ideologies, ideological apparatuses, language, and (medium of) communicative discourse. Intersectionality in the academy serves the neoliberal identity politics for system and social integration of the other into the systemicity of Globalization under American hegemony; it does not call for an alternative form of system and social integration to the matrix of domination of the neoliberal order. On the one hand, in other words, (neo)liberal globalization represents the right-wing (reactionary) attempt to homogenize (converge) the nations of the globe into the overall market-orientation, i.e., private property, individual liberties, and entrepreneurial freedoms, of the capitalist world-system through the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, the retrenchment of the nation-state system around the organization of work under the control of a national or comprador bourgeoisie, right-wing nationalism, austerity, privatization, and protectionism [4-25]. This (neo) liberalization neomercantilism process under America serving as the metropole of the system is usually juxtaposed, on the other hand, against the free-trade mantra, narcissistic exploration of self, sexuality, and identity of the left, disseminated via ideology, ideological apparatuses, language, and (medium of) communicative discourse under the controls of America and the West, which converges with the (neo) liberalizing process via the identity politics and diversified consumerism of the latter groups as they seek equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution (around the organization of work prescribed to them by rentier oligarchs operating out of America and the West) with white agents of the former within their market (finance) logic. As othering reified groups, the other comes to constitute a niche market in postindustrial America and the West served by a diversified (multicultural, multisexual, multiracial, etc.) financed capital to generate surplus value through hyper consumption, finance, insurance, real estate, sports, and entertainment. The proliferation of intersectional theory, post the 1980s, educates the administrative professional bourgeoisie of the system on how to approach and service the other for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution in neoliberal globalization under American hegemony. Hence, both positions, the convergence of the right and the hybridization of the left, are (antagonistically) dialectically related in the age of neoliberal globalization under American hegemony. Private property, individual liberties, diversified consumerism, and the entrepreneurial freedoms of the so-called marketplace become the mechanisms of system and social integration for both groups even though the logic of the marketplace is exploitative, environmentally hazardous, and impacting the climate of the

material resource framework, i.e., the earth, which often requires the protectionist fascists of the right of the dialectic to intervene, in keeping with the “double movement” thesis of Karl Polanyi (2001 [1944]), against the radical (neo) liberalism of the so-called left representing freedoms to and identity politics under the guise of intersectional theory and others like it, i.e., postmodernism, poststructuralism, and critical race theory [26-74].

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